

Message Text

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TAGS: PLAB, F

SUBJECT: RENAULT STRIKE

REF: PARIS 9187

1. SUMMARY: RENAULT STRIKE AT IMPASSE GIVES NEW EVIDENCE OF CGT INABILITY CONTROL SITUATION. CGT- CFDT CALL FOR TWO HOUR WORK STOPPAGE 6 APRIL IN BILANCOURT BROUGHT OUT ONLY 10 PERCENT

OF WORK FORCE. CGT CALLS FOR RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS.
END SUMMARY.

2. STRIKE BY 373 SEMI- SKILLED (OS) METAL PRESS OPERATORS AT RENAULT' S BILLANCOURT PLANT WAS STUCK AT IMPASSE 4 APRIL FOLLOWING REJECTION OF IMPROVED MANAGEMENT OFFER, INCLUDING COMMITMENT NEGOTIATE CLASSIFICATION GRIEVANCE, PROVIDING WORK RESUMED. STRIKERS INSIST ON OBTAINING HIGHER PROFESSIONAL CLASSIFICATION (" P" CATEGORY), THOUGH NO EXTRA MONEY INVOLVED.

3. COMPANY CONTENTS STRIKERS DO NOT MEET PROMOTION CRITERIA AS PREVIOUSLY AGREED UPON BETWEEN MANAGEMENT AND UNION. UNDER THESE CRITERIA, 6,000 OS WORKERS HAVE RECENTLY BEEN RAISED TO " P" CATEGORY. MANAGEMENT FEARS THAT GRANTING OF " P" GRADE TO STRIKERS WILL OPEN GATE TO UPWARD CLASSIFICATION OF 38,000
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" OS", ROUGHLY 40 PERCENT OF TOTAL RENAULT WORK FORCE. WE UNDERSTAND FROM METAL INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION THAT RENALUT UNDER PRESSURE ALSO FROM OTHER EMPLOYERS TO RESIST STRIKERS DEMAND, LEST RENAULT CONCESSION SET PATTERN FOR ENTIRE METAL INDUSTRY.

4. IN ADDITION TO 373 STRIKERS, SOME 7,000 MEN AT BILLANCOURT PLANT ARE IDLE, HAVING BEEN TEMPORARILY LAID OFF DUE TO LACK OF BODY COMPONENTS AS RESULT OF PRESSMEN' S WALKOUT. SYMPATHY WORK STOPPAGES HAVE DEVELOPED INVOLVING HALF OF PRESS OPERATORS IN RENAULT' S FLINS AND GANDOUVILLE PLANTS.

5. CGT AND CFDT, CONFRONTED WITH SECOND " CONTRACT" REJECTION, RESORTED TO OLD TACTIC OF TRYING TO BRODEN STRIKE MOVEMENT TO ALL WORKERS IN BILLANCOURT PLANT (35,000) AS BEST WAY TO BRING " WILDCAT" BEHAVIOR UNDER SOME CONTROL AND TO NEUTRALIZE EXTREME LEFT ELEMENTS. BUT CGT- CFDT CALL FOR TWO- HOUR, PLANT- WIDE WORK STOPPAGE AT BILLANCOURT 6 APRIL WAS HEEDED BY ONLY ABOUT 10 PERCENT OF WORK FORCE. FROM BEGINNING OF STRIKE CGT SUFFERED FURTHER HUMILIATION WHEN STRIKERS INSISTED THAT THEIR OWN REPPRESENTATIVES PARTICIPATE IN ANY UNION- MANAGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS.

6. FO, TAKING ITS DISTANCE FROM CGT- CFDT, HAS AGAIN CALLED FOR SECRET BALLOT BY STRIKERS. FO CONFEDERAL BUREAU ISSUED SHARP STATEMENT CAUTIONING AGAINST TENDECNY TO PLAY " SORCERER' S APPRENTICE", WHICH LIKELY CREATE SITUATION DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED TO THAT INTENDED.

7. COMMENT: RENAULT SITUATION SHOWING MARKS OF CONFUSION AND AWKWARDNESS USUALLY ASSOCIATED WITH " WILDCAT" STRIKE. DETERMINATION BEING SHOWN BY STRIKERS, THOUGH ROOTED IN LEGITIMATE GRIEVANCES CONCERNING THEIR STATUS AS IMMIGRANT OS WORKERS, DUE IN PART TO GAUCHISTE INFLUENCE. UNCONFIRMED REPORT HAS IT THAT AT LEAST SOME OF MORE MILITANT WILDCATTERS ARE BEING SUBSIDIZED BY MAOISTS.

8. EVIDENCE OF CGT INABILITY CONTROL STRIKERS' BEHAVIOR IS NOT UNANIMOUSLY WELCOMED BY GOF OFFICIALS. SOME OF THESE OFFICIALS HAVE COME TO APPRECIATE PAST CGT ABILITY TO OBTAIN CONTRACT APPROVALS BY ITS MEMBERS WHO IN RENAULT CONSTITUTE GREAT MAJORITY OF WORK FORCE.

9. RANK AND FILE ATTITUDE TOWARD CGT AND CFDT LEADERSHIP LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EMERGES AS KEY ELEMENT IN RESOLUTION OF RENAULT SITUATION.

DESPITE DEMAGOGIC INSINUATIONS, THAT IF STRIKERS WON THEIR " P" CLASSIFICATION THERE MIGHT BE CHAIN PROMOTIONS FOR EVERYONE, BILLANCOURT WORKERS RESISTED CGT- CFDT CALL FOR TWO- HOUR WALKOUT TO SUPPORT STRIKERS' DEMAND. CGT TOOK NOTE AND ASKED FOR RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS PRACTICALLY ON BASIS OF TERMS ALREADY OFFERED, I. E. " P" WAGES BUT NOT " P" CLASSIFICATION.

10. WE WOULD ANTICIPATE THIS TIME CGT WILL TAKE FO' S ADVICE AND CALL FOR SECRET VOTE BY STRIKERS TO PREVENT INTIMIDATION BY MILITANT MINORITY.

11. REGARDLESS OF ITS OUTCOME, CURRENT STRIKE LIKELY TO MARK TURNING POINT IN DEALING WITH PROBLEM OF " INDUSTRIAL WORK CONDITIONS" AND SPECIFICALLY WITH QUESTION OF STATUS AND FUTURE OF " OS" WORKERS. IT WILL PROBABLY SIGNAL END OF INTERMINABLE STUDIES ON THESE PROBLEMS AND BEGINNING OF SERIOUS SEARCH FOR AND EXPERIMENTATION WITH PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS. BY COINCIDENCE 6 APRIL SAW BEGINNING OF CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN CNPF (NATIONAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL) AND UNIONS, FIRST MEETING BEING WITH FO.

12. IT IS SIGNIFICANT IN THIS CONNECTION THAT PRESIDENT POMPIDOU CHOSE FIRST CABINET MEETING OF NEW GOF (6 APRIL) TO UNDERSCORE IMPORTANCE OF " WORK CONDITIONS" ISSUE AND TO CALL FOR " IMAGINATION AND GENEROSITY" IN DEALING WITH PROBLEMS OF IMMIGRANT WORKERS AND OF " OS" (SEMI - SKILLED EMPLOYEES).
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